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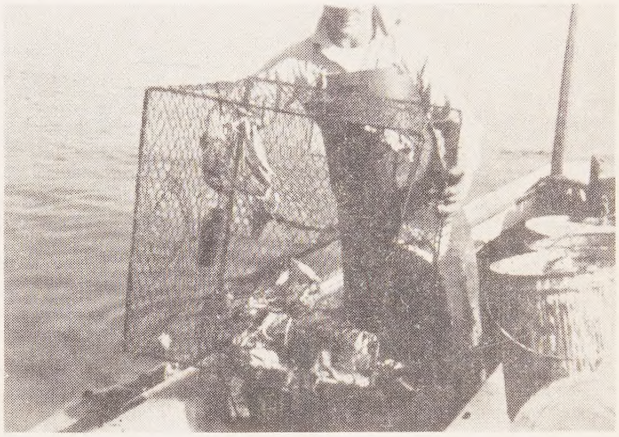
Fishery Leaflet 262

Chicago 54, Illinois 25442 September 1947

CRAB POT CONSTRUCTION
(Chesapeake Bay Type)

By Emmett Andrews, Division of Commercial Fisheries

The crab pot represents the latest in a rather long line of ingenious devices for catching crabs, some of which have been patented. Its construction is very simple and the materials are relatively inexpensive. It, too, has advantages in that little attention is required other than the few minutes needed to take out the crabs and rebait it, although it remains in continuous operation. Bait such as menhaden or alewives is readily available, in most cases, from the trap fishermen. Quite often, the pot will catch its own bait and help control predators.



Briefly, it is cubical in shape, each surface being 24 inches square. The material in the body of the pot is commercial grade, 1½ inch mesh, doubly galvanized, #18 gauge chicken wire. This size mesh will be more selective in the size of crabs taken. The lower funnels, usually one on each side, are made of 1-inch mesh for greater stability. Pots made of 1-inch mesh throughout will be found effective in catching large eels as well as crabs.

Crabs attracted by the bait, enter the lower chamber, find themselves thwarted in reaching the bait by the wire mesh, move into the upper chamber through a second set of funnels and find it difficult to escape.

Traps are usually set individually in a long line, or in a series of short lines parallel to each other, about one hundred feet apart, in water varying from one to ten fathoms in depth. Fishing is usually done by a two man crew in a 35-40 foot boat but can be accomplished by one man.

MATERIALS

176" of 1½" mesh wire netting, 18 gauge, 24" wide

18" of 1" Mesh Wire Netting, 20 Gauge 24" Wide,

5' Heavy Flexible Wire

3/16" Rod Iron (17' For Framework, 1' For Attaching Bait Box To Partition)

Sheet Iron Or Lead Plate

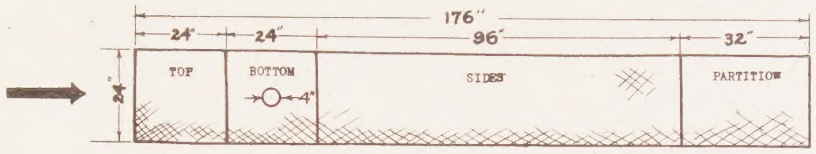
Fish Line, At Least 21 Thread, or #18 Wire

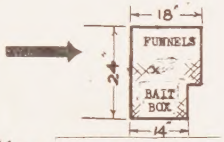
9 Thread Rope

Clothes Pin

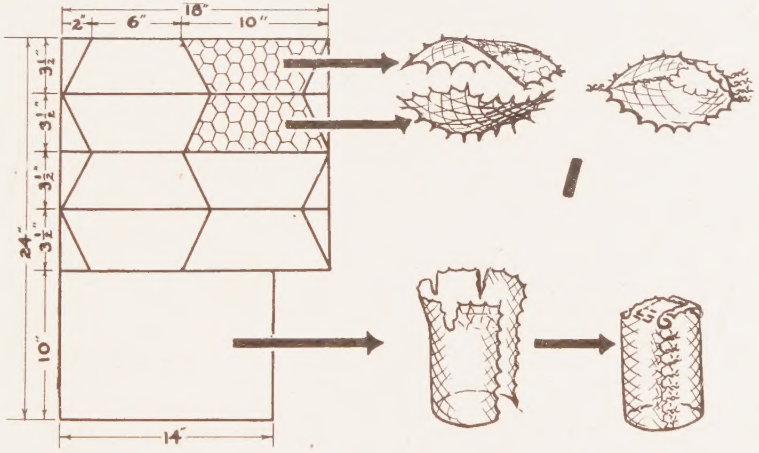
Float

Weight or anchor





CUTTING GUIDE



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METHOD

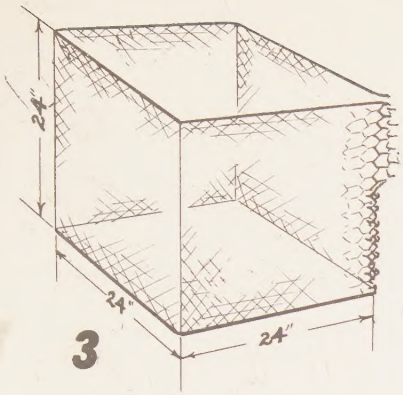
1. Make funnels by twisting together the edges of two pieces of netting along the short edges.

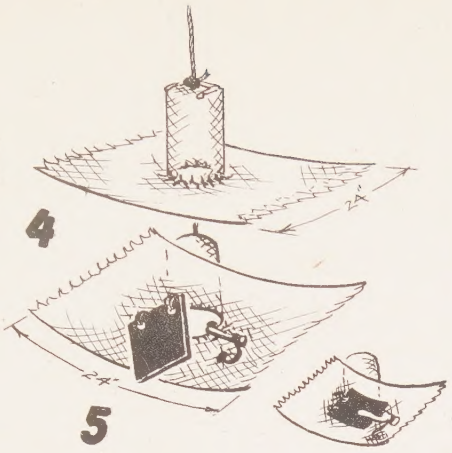
2. Make bait box by rolling strip of netting into a cylinder. Fasten by bending the wires along the vertical seam. Slash the top of the cylinder in three places, to make four tabs at the top, about three inches deep. Bend these down over each other to close the top of the cylinder.

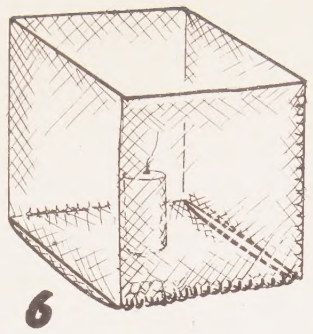
3. Make sides of the pot by bending a piece of netting 24" X 96" into a square. Twist the cut edges of the netting together to fasten along the vertical seam.

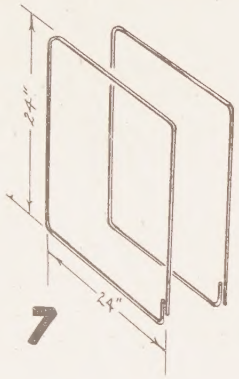
4. Make bottom of pot from piece of netting 24" square, with a hole in the center 4" in diameter. Attach bait box to this hole by twisting the wire together along the junction. Tie 3' of 9 thread rope to the top of the box.

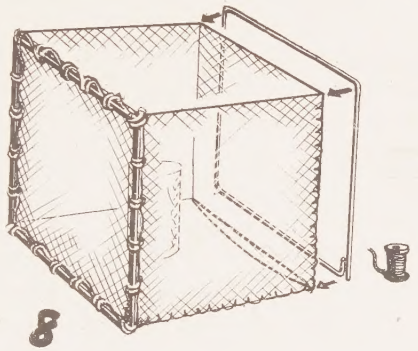
5. Attach 4" X 4" plate to the bottom of bait box. Make two wire hinges on one side, and use a clothes pin for the catch on the opposite side. Tie clothes pin to the netting, leaving enough play to let it slip over edge of plate.

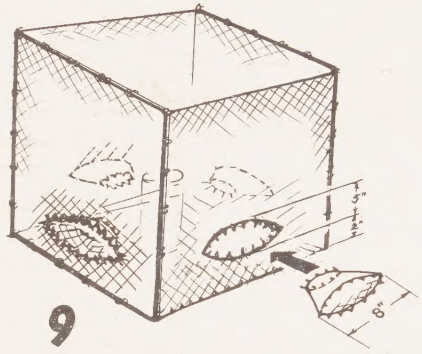


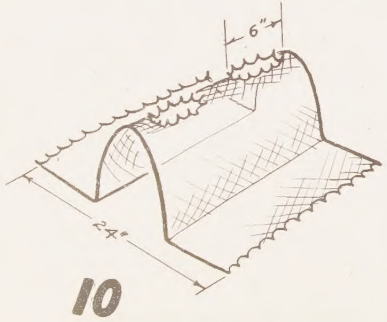


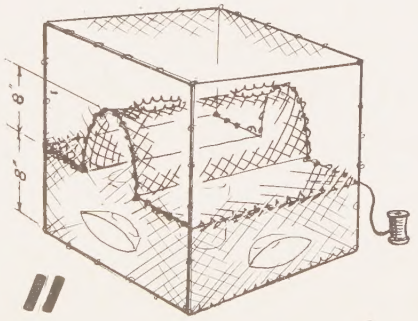


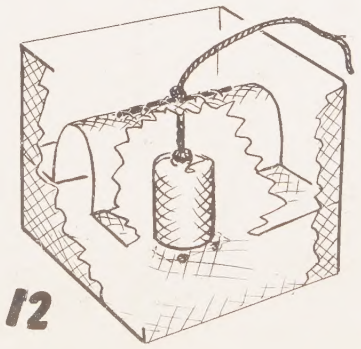








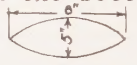




6. Attach bottom section to the sides by twisting the netting together along the two cut edges with projecting prongs.

7. Bend 3/16" rod iron into two squares, 24" to a side.

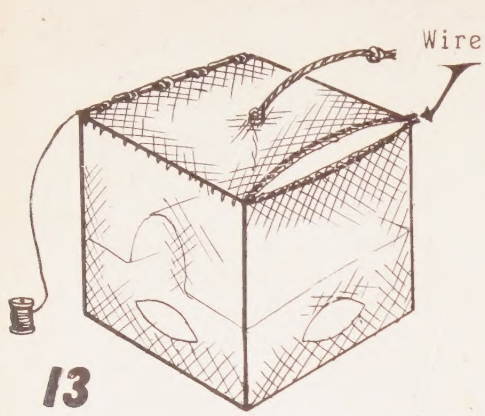
8. Lash these iron squares to two opposite sides of the pot. Use either wire or fishline. At the same time, catch in the unattached sides of the bottom section, so that it is now securely attached to the sides.

9. Cut four holes, one on each side, 2" from the bottom. These should be  in size and shape. Attach funnels, small end in, by twisting cut edges of wire together.

10. Make partition by bending piece of netting 32" X 24" into an arch, giving a final outside dimension of 24" X 24". Cut two slits in the top of the arch, 6" long, and bend the wires back and up.

11. Insert partition. The lowest part should be about 8" from the floor of the pot. Attach by bending wires on cut sides, and lashing with wire or fishline along the straight edges of the netting.

12. Bring rope from bait box up through partition, and tie to an 8" piece of rod iron which is then woven into the mesh at the top of the arch.



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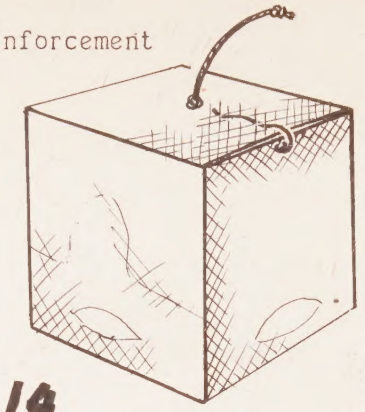

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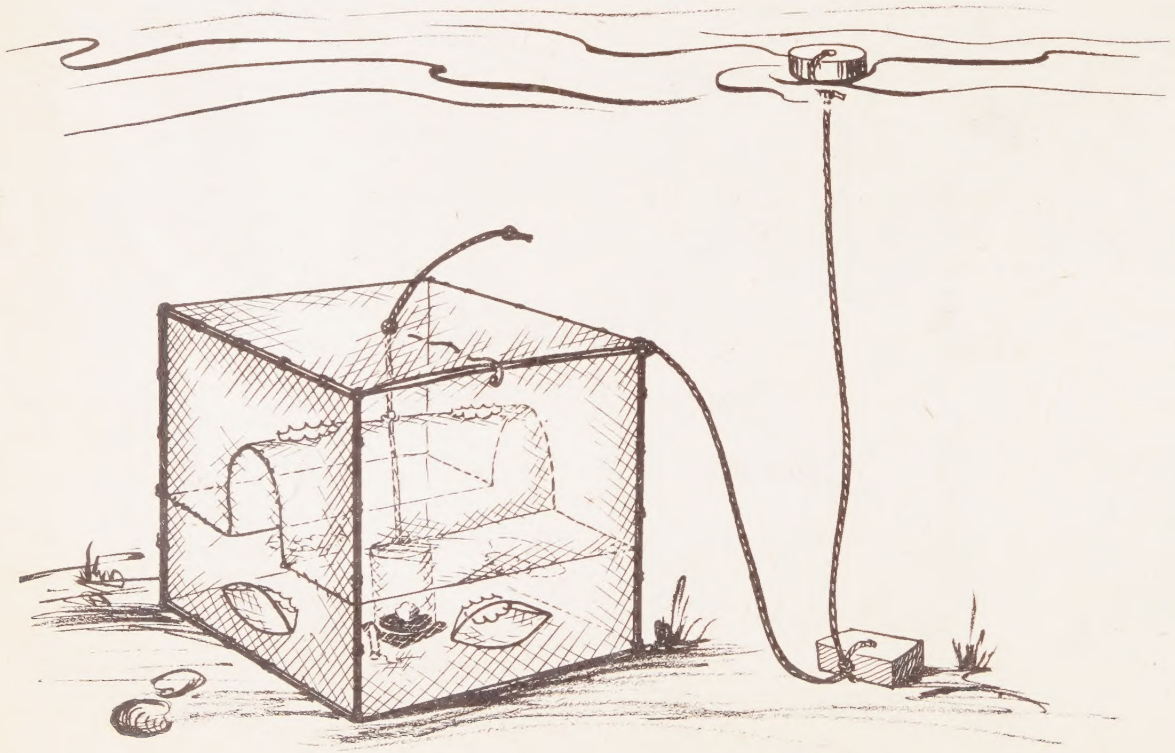

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13. Attach top, a piece of netting 24" square, to the sides on three sides, bending the wires together on two of them, and lashing with wire or fishline on the other. Leave one side open, choosing a side of the top piece which has straight edge. Reinforce the edges of this opening with a piece of heavy, flexible wire, weaving it into the mesh across the edge of the top, and back along the upper edge of the side. Tie rope from bait box to center of top, and tie another knot at the end of the rope. This serves as a handle.

14. Make a catch from a 10" piece of heavy, flexible wire. Twist one end around the mesh on the side, and weave the rest into the mesh of the top.

15. The finished crab pot, in position, requires the addition of a rope, tied to the corner, and attached first to a weight, and then to a float.